

# HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH COLONISATION IN PALESTINE

*(A Lecture delivered before the West London Zionist Association)*

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 837 381 3

*By*

**L. KESSLER**

Published by the English Zionist Federation,  
69, Leadenhall Street, E.C. 3.

1918.

PRICE 4d.



# History and Development of Jewish Colonisation in Palestine

(A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE WEST LONDON ZIONIST  
ASSOCIATION)

By L. KESSLER.

---

**C**OLONY is a name somewhat vaguely applied to the foreign dependencies of a State or to a body of persons who form a fixed settlement in another country and without definite connection with the country or town of their origin.

Nature has been the chief cause of the movement of mankind from one part of the earth to another. Scarcity of the means of existence has operated more frequently and powerfully than any other cause in bringing about such displacement of population. "Thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen," said the Israelites to Pharaoh when they had entered Egypt. In more advanced stages of society a similar cause leads the surplus population of a civilised country to overflow into new lands where there is more space or the means of subsistence are more easily obtainable. Human passion and emotion have been potent in many instances in bringing about displacement of population. The desire for conquest and plunder stimulates invasion and the driving out of aboriginal races. The forcible migration of Jews to Babylonia in Bible times, whence they spread to Persia, is a typical instance of such movements. During the wars of the third and second centuries B.C. thousands of Jews, having been made captives and reduced to slavery, passed from owner to owner and from land to land. The repeated and

formidable efforts of the Jewish people at a later period to drive the Romans out of Palestine and to regain their independence led to the great insurrections, under Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian, which were attended with most disastrous results. Practically the whole population were either massacred or sold into slavery, or fled out of the country into Arabia. The Jewish captives transported to the West were dispersed along the shores of the Mediterranean, and thus became the founders of communities in Italy, Spain, Gaul, and other countries. The sentiment of religion is another cause which has led to movements of peoples, and in some instances to the formation of colonies.

Ever since the Exile Jews have been forced to wander from country to country. They migrated to Rome, to Spain, to Gaul, to England, to Germany, and to Poland. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century sanguinary persecution and economic oppression forced thousands of Jews to leave Poland and other parts of Russia, Galicia, and Roumania, and to seek new homes, chiefly in the British Colonies and in the United States. In more recent times we have witnessed the forcible removal, under the most cruel circumstances, of the Jewish masses from the Pale to the interior regions of Russia. A full record of the migrations of the Jewish people would be almost identical with a complete Jewish history. Under the impulse of persecution and economic oppression, Jews have spread all over the lands of the habitable globe, but heathen and more often Christian injustice and intolerance cramped and crippled at every turn the settlements founded by these refugees.

The religious longing after the ancient glories of Zion on the one hand, and the deeply felt desire for deliverance from the miserable conditions under which Israel was compelled to live on foreign soil on the other, have never, to our own days, ceased to exercise a most powerful influence on the members of the race. Such sentiments led to repeated attempts to restore Israel to the Promised Land. All these attempts, however, were bound to fail, because they were planless and disconnected; they could not be otherwise, having regard to the wide dispersions of the Jews and the primitive means of communication. The external conditions in which the Jews lived for so many centuries made it impossible for them, in fact, to realise that for which they hoped and prayed. True, Palestine was never devoid of some Jewish population. Even after the final national catastrophe, the rising under Bar Cochba (133-135), a Jewish remnant was left in devastated and depopulated Palestine, and this remnant was reinforced from time to time by those who returned from exile. Their numbers, however, always remained far too small for them

to regain any lasting influence upon the destinies of the country.

There exist records of small settlements of Jews in Palestine dating as far back as 1170. Under the Osmons, in the sixteenth century, the Jews of Palestine were settled mostly in Galilee, and they were reinforced by exiles from Spain. In this period occurred the remarkable colonising attempt of Joseph Nasi. To escape from persecution and religious intolerance, Joseph had fled from Portugal, the country of his birth, to Antwerp, thence to Venice, and later to Constantinople. There at last he could openly appear as a Jew. Nasi's handsome presence and his amiable character, as well as the far-reaching financial relations of the Nasi family, soon won for him the favour of the Sultan Sulaiman II. (1520-1566). The Sultan, to reward Joseph for distinguished service, conferred upon him Tiberias in Palestine and several smaller places in its vicinity as his property, to be used exclusively for Jewish colonisation. He issued a Proclamation to the Jews, saying that all the persecuted who were willing to labour as farmers or artisans might find refuge in the new Jewish community. The community of Cori, in the Roman Campagna, numbering about 200 souls, who suffered greatly under Pope Paul IV. (1515-59), decided to emigrate to Tiberias in a body, and later the community of Pesaro also sent a ship with 102 emigrants. It is, however, not known how many emigrants actually reached Palestine, nor what became of these colonists.

Apart from this practical project, there were many schemes based upon Messianic speculations and purely religious hopes. The most important of these was that of Sabbathai Zebi, who, during the reign of Sultan Mohammed IV. (1649-1687), personated the Messiah, and announced that he would restore Israel to the Promised Land. The appearance of this impostor caused an upheaval amongst the Jewish communities; many made all preparations to follow his lead. Such events as these clearly demonstrate how ardent and firm was the belief in the restoration of Israel among the Jews at that time.

The prosperous condition of the Jews in Turkey from the beginning of the fifteenth century till the commencement of the seventeenth was not secured by fixed laws, but depended wholly on the goodwill of individual rulers. With the waning of the Turkish power the government became corrupt and inefficient. Overtaxed and oppressed, the population of Palestine was gradually reduced to poverty. In 1660 Safed was destroyed by the Arabs.

The eighteenth century brought no improvement in the condition of Palestine. The standard of civilisation throughout Turkey was very low, and the masses were illiterate and

impoverished. Nevertheless, Jews, moved by religious motives, continued to migrate in small numbers to Palestine. But whereas up to the middle of the eighteenth century the immigrants had come from Western Europe and were Sephardim, there now commenced a considerable influx of Jews from Poland and South Russia.

In 1799 Napoleon I. invaded Palestine from Egypt, captured Jaffa, laid siege to Acre, and penetrated as far as Safed and Nazareth. In 1831 Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mohammed Ali, the powerful ruler of Egypt, invaded Palestine and conquered it. But neither Napoleon's conquests nor the Egyptian supremacy in Syria did much to improve the condition of the unhappy country.

In 1840, through the intervention of England and Austria, Syria was regained for the Sultan Abdul-Mejid, but the restoration of Turkish rule brought no relief to the people. The Jewish population lived in deep misery, oppressed by the Mohammedans and persecuted by the Christians. There was no security for life or property, and they could not take up agricultural work, even had they been willing and able to do so, because the Bedouin were sure to rob them of the fruit of their labours. Palestine had become a ruined country, ruined by bad government.

Nevertheless, the holiness of Palestine continued to attract settlers to study, to pray and to die there. Practically the whole of the Jewish population of Palestine lived in the "holy" cities—Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Hebron. They were supported by the Chalukah, that is, by funds collected by Jews outside Palestine. The intense poverty of these Jews induced well-meaning and charitable persons to attempt the alleviation of their lot by employment on the land. Thus in 1850 the American Consul at Jerusalem, Warder Cresson, a convert to Judaism, who took the name of Michael C. Boaz Israel, established a Jewish agricultural colony near Jerusalem. Sir Moses Montefiore, too, cherished the idea of establishing agricultural colonies in Palestine. On his fourth visit to the East, in 1854, Sir Moses selected thirty-five families from Safed, and provided them with the means necessary to begin farming. But these experiments did not succeed. They were undertaken with insufficient means and with quite unsuitable human material. Untrained town dwellers could not be converted all at once into peasants. Similar difficulties caused the failure of later settlements attempted by some Jews of Jerusalem and Safed.

The problem of Jewish agricultural colonies was attacked in a more practical way by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* of Paris. This organisation, influenced by a group of Russian Rabbis, started by establishing an agricultural school. The Turkish Government presented the *Alliance* with 617 acres of



land near Jaffa, and here in 1870 the farm-school Mikveh Israel—"The Gathering (or Hope) of Israel"—was founded under the supervision of Charles Netter. By providing training in all agricultural branches this institution prepared the way for colonisation on a larger scale. Around the school grew up a settlement of Jewish agriculturists, while former pupils supplied the need for gardeners and teachers of agriculture. In 1914, before the outbreak of war, this school, which at one time had over 200 pupils, was reorganised in accordance with the modern requirements of the country.

The motives which principally induced Jews to migrate to Palestine during part of the eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth century were religious. The Jewish people in general, living in more or less hostile environments in the various European countries, based its hopes for a better future on the growing enlightenment and the collapse of absolutism, feudalism and clericalism. The new ideas which became prevalent in the constitutional States of Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century recognised the political equality of all citizens without regard to difference in religious belief. The Jews began to feel themselves fellow-citizens and equals of their non-Jewish neighbours. Even in Russia they enjoyed comparative liberty in the reign of Alexander II. Soon, however, a period of reaction commenced, and the fear that ambitious Jews, identifying themselves with the Gentiles, might acquire great power and become too powerful in the life of the State, gave rise to the movement known as anti-Semitism. Beginning in 1875 in Germany, this movement spread to Austria, France and Russia. In 1881 the intense persecutions in Russia began, and in Roumania restrictions were added to restrictions, till the very existence of a Jew in that country became almost impossible.

These events forced the thoughtful to reconsider their position among the nations of the earth, and there arose, especially among the younger generation in Eastern Europe, a sentiment in favour of Jewish national existence, which eventually became the dominating force in directing a constant stream of immigrants to Palestine. It is true that long before the rise and extension of modern anti-Semitism the idea of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was actively propagated by Jewish and also by Christian writers: for instance by Mordecai M. Noah of New York, Petavel of Neuchatel, Moritz Steinschneider of Prague, Luzzatto of Padua, George Eliot and Laurence Oliphant in England, David Gordon, Ben Jehuda, Perez Smolenskin in Russia, Hirsch Kalischer, Moses Hess and the historian Heinrich Graetz in Germany. But the influence of these writers did not extend very far. The efforts of intellectuals alone cannot bring about a great political change,

which necessitates the passing of ideas into actuality. The Russian massacres of 1881 roused among Jews a strong sense of racial kinship, and were thus a powerful stimulant of the national consciousness among the masses.

Tens of thousands fled from Russia and Roumania to seek a place of refuge in England and North America. It was thus that the large Jewish communities here in England and across the ocean originated, and these were destined to become important centres for the growth and dissemination of Jewish national sentiment in the English-speaking countries. In Russia itself the atrocities of 1881 gave an impetus to the organisation of societies with the aim of creating in Palestine a home for the Jewish people. One of these societies, composed of University students, set itself the task of furnishing the pioneers for the colonisation of Palestine. They took for their motto the word "Bilu," which is an abbreviation of a Hebrew sentence meaning "House of Jacob, come, let us go." A small party of members of this association, in conjunction with Joseph Fineberg and S. D. Levontin, formed in 1882 the agricultural settlement, now known as Rishon-le-Zion ("The first in Zion"). About the same time refugees from Roumania arrived in Palestine and settled further north, founding the agricultural colonies of Zichron Jacob ("The memorial of Jacob") in Samaria and Rosh-Pinah ("The corner stone") in Galilee. Certain Jews of Jerusalem had already founded the agricultural settlement of Petach-Tikvah ("The Gate of Hope") on the River Audjeh. These Jewish pioneers, mostly students and townsmen without any previous experience of farming, engaged in manual labour to cultivate the land that had been acquired. Such was the beginning of the modern national colonisation movement.

The life of a pioneer in a new country is almost always attended by hardships and privations, and these were exceptionally severe in Palestine. The colonists were ignorant of the nature of the country and of the language and customs of the Arab population. Moreover their financial means were quite insufficient. The difficulties were such that even their splendid enthusiasm and grit could not have prevented failure, had not help come from outside. It came from the societies which the enthusiasm of such leaders as Moses Lilienblum, Dr. Pinsker, Rabbi Mohilewer and others had created in the Jewish centres of Russia for the practical assistance of the colonists in Palestine. The immigrants from Roumania were saved by the generous and kindly intervention of Laurence Oliphant, who was then living at Haifa. He supported them at his own expense, until, by his letters to the *Jewish Chronicle* of London, their precarious position became known. Help was also forthcoming from Baron Edmond de Rothschild, that noble-hearted patron,



who at length took three colonies under his fostering care. He has supported and encouraged the Jewish cause in Palestine ever since.

The national idea taking hold of the Jewish masses in Russia, the colonisation movement assumed larger proportions. Other settlements were started in Palestine under difficulties similar to those of the earlier colonists. Concerted action became necessary to help the struggling colonists, and this brought about the union of the various Jewish Nationalist societies, which became known as the "Chovevé Zion," or "Lovers of Zion."

The "Chovevé Zion" movement spread from Russia to Roumania, Germany, Austria, England, and the United States. To the "Chovevé Zion" and Baron Edmond de Rothschild belongs the honour of having created the first foundation for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine. For without their encouragement and assistance the colonies would never have survived.

†‡ Baron Rothschild sent agricultural experts to advise and direct the colonists. He bought large tracts of land for the extension of existing settlements and for the founding of others. He sent from his French estates the best varieties of vines, large vineyards were created by his order, and large wine-cellar, fitted with modern machinery, were built at Rishon-le-Zion. He directed attention to floriculture, and a perfume distillery was built in Petach-Tikvah. Near Zichron Jacob a glass factory was erected.

The renewed persecutions in Russia in 1891 caused a considerable increase in the immigration into Palestine and the arrival of representatives of numerous private groups for the purchase of land. In the absence of anything in the nature of organisation, land speculation set in, accompanied by the appearance of newcomers of undesirable character. In consequence the Turkish Government issued a decree prohibiting the immigration of Russian Jews and the sale of land to them. These restrictions were soon removed through the good offices of Baron Edmond de Rothschild. But the situation created by the events of 1891 caused a general depression and a reconsideration of the methods hitherto employed in Palestinian colonisation. The criticism of Aehad ha-Am, the good guide and philosopher of the "Chovevé Zion," who were now acting through the Odessa Committee, was most beneficial at this stage, and led to the introduction of reforms.

By 1898 twenty-five agricultural colonies, with a population of 5,000 Jews, had been established. Of the 600 families of actual colonists (300 families day labourers) 390 families, or 1,000 persons, were under the management of the Rothschild administration.

It is not surprising that, in the absence of all previous experience in Palestine, some serious blunders were made by the agents of the Baron. In a country where cheap and suitable fuel was unobtainable, a glass factory, for instance, could not be economically operated. The initial success of the vineyards, again, led other colonies to plant vines almost to the exclusion of any other crop, and this caused over-production. Baron Rothschild recognised that reforms were needed to make the colonies self-supporting. Accordingly, in 1899, he arranged for the Jewish Colonisation Association (the "J. C. A.") to take over and reorganise his colonies.

The system of colonisation in Palestine that had been adopted, not only by Baron Rothschild, but also by the various societies, was based on philanthropic principles. It accustomed the settlers to expect help and assistance from without on all occasions, and destroyed all confidence in themselves. Many of the agents, young Jews from Eastern Europe, who had been educated—and from some points of view not improved—in France, were quite unfit for the responsible position of managers, and their *régime* undermined the proud determination of the settlers to create a home for themselves by their own strength. With the aim of developing a spirit of self-reliance amongst the settlers, and of making the colonies self-supporting, the "J. C. A." introduced drastic reforms. The vine-planters were organised into a co-operative society and provided with sufficient working capital to enable them to take over and manage the great wine cellars of Rishon-le-Zion and Zichron Jacob. The Carmel Company, formed for the sale of the wine, established agencies abroad, such as the Palestine Wine and Trading Company of London, and secured in this way a wider market for one of the principal productions of Jewish labour in the colonies. The vineyards were reduced in size, and olives, almonds, and oranges were planted instead. Wine-growing in Palestine was thus established on a sound commercial basis. In order that the colonists might not be dependent on the vintage only, the cultivation of cereals was fostered on suitable land bought for the purpose.

The reforms introduced by the "J. C. A." were successful in many ways, but had evil as well as good results. The agents of Baron Rothschild had been permitted to spend rather freely, and in order to make the colonies self-supporting it was necessary to insist on economy and to eliminate unprofitable work. This led to the dismissal of a number of Jewish labourers, who were unable to find work elsewhere, and thus caused depression and emigration.

Although the colonies were provided with schools, many children were sent to town schools, created by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. The teaching there was given in French,

with the distinct object of providing the pupils with an education that would enable them to find employment in America or elsewhere abroad, as it was thought they could not become self-supporting in Palestine. Thus the tendency to emigrate was fostered among the young, and doubt was raised concerning the future of the settlements. Achad ha-Am had already in 1893 made the proposal to the Chovevé Zion that the question of national education be treated as the most important part of their work in Palestine. But the Chovevé Zion were in practice merely a colonisation society, whose untiring and devoted work remained unnoticed outside their own particular circles. Jewry in general hardly knew of the existence of the colonies. Darkest Africa was less a *terra incognita* than Palestine. Only occasionally were the Jews in the various countries reminded of those living in Palestine by messengers—generally not very prepossessing—who came to ask for assistance for the Chalukah, or by the arrival of begging letters with cheap souvenirs from the Holy Land.

The Chovevé Zion Movement, however, was the herald of coming events. The ever-increasing stream of emigrants, fleeing from savage and merciless persecution in Russia and Roumania, had vividly brought to the minds of the civilised world the miserable condition of the Jewish masses. In Western Europe, particularly in Germany and Austria, a new generation of Jews had grown up, educated, during the short era of liberalism, in the Public Schools. They were steeped in the national spirit and culture of their native countries. They were religiously indifferent; they imagined and felt themselves to be exactly like their fellow-citizens. Jews had been in the front rank of those who had fought for personal freedom, and they imagined that the battle had been definitely won. The strong rise of anti-Semitism in these countries caused sad and painful disappointment. But there was, too, a revival of that pride of race which had practically disappeared amongst the Jews. They were now denounced as a foreign element, a danger to the native culture, and their right to civil and political equality was disputed. The Governments discriminated against them, not indeed by law, but in practice. On the other hand, the Jews saw the power of a nation's resistance in the action of such peoples as those of Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Roumania, and Bulgaria, peoples all less numerous and less cultured than the Jewish people: these all had gained complete liberty, while the Jew was still an outcast. The logic of brutal facts shattered the belief in fine phrases about freedom and brotherhood, and led to a revolution of ideas. Jews began to recognise that political emancipation was not enough to make their position respected and secure.

These conditions produced the man and the movement which galvanised into life and vigour Palestinian activity. The man was Theodor Herzl. He touched the core of the Jewish question as many saw it, and sent a thrill of fervour through the Jewish masses by the publication of his *Judenstaat*, in which he outlined his scheme for the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth. Under his leadership the world-wide Zionist Organisation arose, its aim being the creation for the Jewish people of a home in Palestine secured by Public Law. Zionists argued that Jewry, to become respected, needed, like other nations, its Motherland. Herzl was, however, opposed to immediate work in Palestine. I had traversed that country in all directions in 1900 for my own information, and I sent to Dr. Herzl a report containing the results of my observation. I emphasised the importance of making endeavours to induce the Turkish authorities to remove the restrictions then enforced against the Jewish settlers, and further expressed the opinion that only actual work towards occupation of the country by Jews would induce the Powers to recognise the political and historical claims of the Zionist Organisation. The Actions Committee, then located in Vienna, opposed these views, and replied that colonisation, under the then existing Turkish *régime*, which provided no protection, would be harmful. Only a Charter granted by Turkey could offer guarantees for work in Palestine.

Circumstances proved too strong for this attitude to be long maintained. The Zionist movement had spread to every nook and corner of the Jewish world, and had aroused keen interest in the colonisation of Palestine. The demand for immediate work without waiting for the grant of a Charter grew stronger, especially amongst the Zionists in Russia. Thus, in order to promote Jewish interests in Palestine, a bank, the Anglo-Palestine Co., Ltd., was formed as a daughter institute of the Jewish Colonial Trust, the financial instrument of the Zionist Organisation. The head office for the Orient was opened in Jaffa in 1903, and in subsequent years branches were established in all the larger towns—from Gaza in the South to Beyrout in the North.

The Turkish Revolution of 1908 stimulated the demand for practical activity in Palestine by raising the hope that the Government of the Young Turks, if it would not assist, would at least not hinder Jewish colonisation work. In the same year the Zionist Organisation established a Palestine Office in Jaffa, intended in the first instance to act as the representative of the Jewish National Fund in Palestine. This fund had been formed on the initiative of the late Professor Schapira, of Heidelberg, for the purpose of acquiring land in Palestine as a permanent possession of the Jewish people.



The Anglo-Palestine Co., Ltd., commenced operations by creating a system of credit, on strict business lines, intended to be within the reach of everyone. That was no easy task. The Jewish population in Palestine was indeed used to borrowing from the various philanthropic institutions, but the habit of repaying was less developed. It was a great surprise, and I daresay not a pleasant one to some, when they realised that this new Jewish institution did not intend to adopt the discredited system of support which the "J. C. A." and the Odessa Committee had but just abandoned, but made the fulfilment of obligations a condition of all transactions. In time the Bank succeeded in educating the settlers, and it has acquired a position of very considerable importance in the economic life of Palestine. Previously banking facilities were non-existent, and the only source of credit, apart from charitable institutions, was that of the Arab usurers. The management of the Anglo-Palestine Co. recognised that the progress of Jewish colonisation demanded the encouragement of energetic and enterprising settlers, whether planters, corn growers, merchants, or manufacturers, by granting liberal credits. Co-operative societies and mutual loan and saving unions were formed amongst dairy-farmers, orange and wine growers, cattle-breeders, artisans, and labourers. The settlers, thus organised, were now able to obtain loans from the Bank for many public and communal objects, such as the construction of irrigation and water works, schools, and hospitals, the direct purchase of the "Osher," etc. (The "Osher," the principal tax in the Ottoman Empire, is sold by public tender and is collected by the purchaser or tax farmer, who, of course, has an interest in gathering in many times the amount paid for it.)

The decision of the Jewish National Fund to commence work in Palestine in 1908 enabled the Bank to extend further its field of activity. It was found that difficulties of a legal and practical nature prevented, for the time being, the Jewish National Fund from using its funds solely for carrying out the object for which it was founded—that is, the purchase of land in Palestine. Pending the removal of these difficulties, the Fund deposited £20,000 with the Bank, and this sum, later on increased by deposits from the Odessa Committee and the Ezra Society, was to be used for long-term loans to the Jewish settlers. These loans, granted to building societies, rendered it possible to create modern townships in the vicinity of Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem. These suburbs, with broad and clean streets, have, especially in the case of Jaffa, enabled a large part of the Jewish population to remove from the dirty, insanitary Arab streets into homes built in accordance with modern requirements. Long-term loans were also granted to



planters to complete orange and almond plantations, as well as to labour associations for the purpose of building cottages in the neighbourhood of the larger colonies.

Just before the outbreak of the war there were in existence 80 societies with 2,780 members, who were indebted to the Bank to the amount of £72,000. Incorporated in such societies were :—

- 1,018 farmers, planters, and other agriculturists ;
- 830 shopkeepers and small tradesmen ;
- 626 artisans and labourers ;
- 75 clerks and teachers ;
- 231 other persons belonging to various occupations.

---

2,780

---

How to enable the Jewish labourer to compete with the Arab, whose requirements are few, and whose standard of life is low, is an important problem in connection with colonisation in Palestine. Work in the colonies is, moreover, to a great extent seasonal ; in the spring and at harvest time considerably more labour is required than during the rest of the year. The Jewish National Fund has commenced to tackle this question in a systematic way by erecting cottages, and letting them at low rentals, together with plots of land, to Jewish agricultural labourers, who, besides working in the colonies, can, with the help of their families, take up market-gardening and poultry farming.

In 1913 a new class of labour began to arrive in steadily increasing numbers. This was composed of Jews from the Yemen, where lawlessness and oppression threatened to deprive them of the means of existence, if not of life itself. The Yemenites, acquainted with the language of the country, accustomed to a similar climate, and with simple needs, promise to develop into a peasant class well able to compete with the Arabs. The Jewish National Fund has further established farms and plantations, especially of olive trees, as training centres for Jewish labourers, who, thus trained, are better able to compete with the Arabs by virtue of greater efficiency and reliability.

Purchases of land by Jews, with means of their own, steadily increased, thanks to the activity of companies, which, partly financed by the Jewish National Fund and by the Anglo-Palestine Co., bought large estates and cut them up to suit the requirements of individuals.

Side by side with efforts to further the material progress of the Jewish settlers in Palestine, there have to be noted important achievements in education and research.

In the Manual Training School at Jerusalem, supported by

the Rothschild family, a number of trades are taught. The "Bezalel," a school of arts and crafts maintained by the Zionist Organisation, instructs its pupils in the weaving of carpets, in the manufacture of silver filigree ware, in inlaid work, carving, etc. The *Alliance Israélite*, the Anglo-Jewish Association and the *Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden* have between them constructed a network of good schools all over Palestine. The bewildering use of the French, English and German languages in the schools as media of instruction tended to further interests foreign and opposed to the policy of national colonisation, and led to a struggle some five years ago for and against the Hebraisation of the schools. The Jewish population of Palestine without hesitation took up a strong attitude, and made considerable pecuniary sacrifices in defence of the Hebrew language. They expressed their view in the following resolution, which was adopted throughout the country:—"Both from a National and from a practical point of view, only a school in which Hebrew is the chief language can claim to have any *raison d'être* in Palestine to-day, for the Hebrew tongue alone can unite the various elements of Judaism in Palestine." The direct outcome of the dispute was the establishment of Hebrew schools, Hebrew in spirit and character. The fight for the schools served as a clear indication of the deep changes that had taken place and of the surprising development of a strong nationalist sentiment amongst all classes of Palestinian Jewry.

The important question of health has also engaged the attention of institutions and individuals.

In the colonies, eucalyptus trees have been planted to dry up the swampy lands, and to destroy the breeding-ground of mosquitoes. Hospitals have been established in all towns and larger colonies, while in Jerusalem a Health Bureau has been founded by Mr. Nathan Straus, of New York, to assist in subduing the causes of disease. Another American-Jewish institution is the Jewish Agricultural Experiment Station, situated near the colony of Zichron Jacob, and directed by Mr. A. Aaronsohn.

It is not possible in a short pamphlet to do justice to all the efforts and achievements of Jewish colonisation during the last twenty years, but a few figures will serve to illustrate the progress which has been made.

About fifty Jewish agricultural settlements, with a population of about 15,000 souls, have arisen in Palestine. They are situated mainly in the maritime plain from Gaza in the South to Haifa in the North, and in the Valley of the Jordan from the Lake of Galilee to the upper regions of that river. The colonies own an area of 110,000 acres, which represents 11 per cent. of the cultivated surface of Palestine. Mr. Tolkowsky, who has

expert knowledge and is himself a Palestinian farmer, speaks thus of the efficiency of the colonists :—

“ With the Arabs, the cereals (wheat and barley) yield an average gross produce of about £1 per acre; in the better Jewish colonies, the fields yield up to £2 and £3 and more. In Arab orange-groves, 350 cases of oranges per acre are considered a very good average crop; Jewish orange-groves, as a rule, yield about 40 to 50 per cent. more, and in the last year before the War a yield of no less than 757 cases—that is, more than double the Arab yield—was obtained. Arab vineyards do not yield as a rule more than £6 to £7 in value of gross produce per acre; the Jewish vine-planters obtain an average of £12 to £13.”

In 1890, one acre of irrigable land at Petaeh-Tikvah was worth £3 to £12; in 1914, £36. In 1912 the value of the annual production of this colony was £36,000.

The annual trade of Jaffa rose from £760,000 to £2,000,000 between 1904 and 1912. It has been estimated that the oranges and wines exported by the neighbouring Jewish colonies represent nearly 25 per cent. of the total exports from the port of Jaffa.

The cash deposits with the Anglo-Palestine Co., Ltd., have steadily risen, and stood at £400,000 before the outbreak of war.

Between 1881 and 1914 the Jewish population increased from 25,000 to about 120,000 souls. The total population of Palestine was estimated somewhere between 600,000 and 700,000 souls, but the War and its consequences, famine and disease, have probably much reduced the Moslem population. Palestine has an area of about 28,000 square kilometres, and is about as large as Belgium. Compared with the rapid growth of European settlements in North and South America, these figures are not very imposing, but it has to be remembered that these results of Jewish colonising activity have been achieved by a number of independent organisations, inspired by different and often contradictory tendencies. There was certainly not sufficient concerted activity to overcome the extremely difficult and unfavourable conditions. The settlers had no State or Government to back or assist their efforts. In Russia the collection of funds for work in Palestine was periodically declared illegal, while in Palestine itself the Ottoman authorities looked with suspicion on the settlers and placed difficulties in their way. The absence of adequate courts of justice and of an efficient police force exposed the settlers to attacks on life and property by marauding Arab bands. For their own protection the colonists had to form close settlements within easy reach of the coast and the towns, and had to organise amongst themselves a service of rural police. The conditions under which the colonists found them-

selves prevented the utilisation of suitable land at a distance. One misses in Palestine the isolated homesteads surrounded by farm lands which are so characteristic of other countries colonised by Europeans. The settlers had, moreover, to contend against the heavy taxation and totally neglected sanitary conditions, which endangered their lives and health. The results obtained in the face of such difficulties tend to show that the human will knows no insurmountable obstacle within the bounds of the habitable earth.

The only progress in Palestine reported during the War is the construction of strategic roads and railways. All colonisation work has come to a standstill.

I have dealt so far with the past. What about the future?

Peace and a settled, civilised government are the essential preliminary conditions of progress. Presuming these assured, the question of the suitability of Palestine for resettlement with a Jewish population is one which must be decided on the basis of our knowledge of the climatic conditions and natural resources of the country.

Palestine has a dry, hot summer and a rainy but comparatively warm winter. The spring and autumn seasons are very short. Owing to the great differences in altitude the climate varies greatly in different parts of the country. Three climatic zones may be distinguished: the sub-tropical coast region, the mountains with a continental climate, and the tropical valley of the Jordan. From the beginning of May to the end of October the sky is generally cloudless and the atmosphere brilliantly clear. During the dry season vegetation soon loses its beauty, except in artificially irrigated spots. The impression made on the European tourist, unacquainted with sub-tropical countries at that time of year, is certainly not favourable, and has given rise to the legend that Palestine is a dreary waste.

Towards the end of October the first rains begin to fall, softening the ground sufficiently for ploughing. During November the weather is delightful; the heavy winter rains fall from December to February, and promote the growth of the crops. The showers are generally heavier than in Europe. Northern Palestine has more rain than the southern parts and the Jordan Valley.

The summer heat is trying at times, when the thermometer rises up to  $90^{\circ}$  or even  $100^{\circ}$ , but is largely mitigated by cool nights. In the low-lying valley of the Jordan and of the Dead Sea the heat is excessive, and these parts are not suitable for habitation by Europeans during the summer. The cultivators of this fertile stretch of country would have to erect their homesteads on the high-lying borders of the Ghor or valley near by.



In Jerusalem snow falls occasionally during the winter, but does not lie longer than a day. East of the Jordan, however, snow lies for several days, and in the mountains of Lebanon all the year round.

It is evident that in a semi-tropical region cleanliness and the strict enforcement of sanitary regulations are essential. The absence of both in Palestine has been the cause of recurring severe epidemics of cholera, smallpox, typhus and other diseases. The precautions taken by the Turkish authorities against these diseases were often worse than useless. Moreover, there was the impossibility of enforcing health precautions upon many of the inhabitants, who were protected under the extra-territorial rights of the European Powers. The population of Palestine also suffers severely from malaria. The carrier of infection is, as is well known, a certain variety of mosquito. It would no doubt be possible, if power were given to a competent sanitary authority, to eradicate malaria by anti-mosquito measures and the other plagues by vaccination, isolation of infectious cases and general sanitation—in short, by the now well-recognised means which have been so effective even in countries with far less favourable natural conditions than those of Palestine.

The resources of Palestine, so far as is known, are mainly agricultural. Thanks to its great diversity of climate Palestine lends itself to the cultivation of all sorts of plants. The soil is fertile, and even the Syrian desert affords good pasture after the early rain. The productiveness of the soil has already been proved to some extent in the Jewish colonies and by other European settlers. Galilee in ancient times was regarded as a most fertile district. To this day the great plain east of the Jordan, the Hauran, is the granary of Syria. Palestine is the native land of the olive, and olives are still a staple product of the country. Grapes grow to perfection and in great variety, yielding excellent wines; the fig tree flourishes wherever it is planted and cared for. Oranges, almonds, apricots and pomegranates all thrive in parts of the land. Tobacco can be cultivated in many parts. In the Jordan valley bananas, rice, sugar-cane, cotton and dates all might be cultivated with profit. The products of Palestine are noted for quality, Palestinian hard wheat, for instance, being highly rated. Dry-farming methods introduced by that energetic agronomist, Mr. Aaronson, have enabled people to obtain in Palestine, even on very poor soil, good yields of wheat, and have made possible the successful growing of fruit trees without irrigation. Cattle, sheep and other live stock can be raised in Palestine.

There are large areas in the land which in consequence of the neglect of centuries have been rendered desolate. In Southern Palestine, now for the most part barren, there can still be seen traces of the terraces which held up the soil along the side of



the hills, on which vineyards and olive-groves once flourished. The terraces have been destroyed, and the heavy winter rains have carried away the soil, leaving bare the limestone rock. A restoration of these terraces would make possible again the gradual cultivation of hundreds of square miles of hill slope now devoid of trees and shrubs. In other parts, with the help of irrigation, the land could be made to yield abundant crops. But for this purpose dams must be constructed in suitable localities to retain and store the winter water, so that it may be utilised for irrigation in summer. The region that without doubt furnishes the best field for irrigation is the valley of the Jordan, some 90 miles in length. Mr. Aaronson, an authority on the subject, says: "With irrigation fully developed and wisely used, with dry-farming methods consistently applied where irrigation is not possible, the agricultural productions of Palestine could stand comparison with any other country in yield and quality."

Little is known of the mineral resources of Palestine east of the Jordan. Beds of phosphates have been found there, which, according to all accounts, given facilities of transport, promise to become of economic value. South of the Dead Sea salt and sulphur deposits are known to exist, but whether they are of commercial value remains still to be ascertained. The occurrence of copper ores has been reported, but no reliable investigation appears so far to have been made. Practically the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan has the same geological formation—limestone of cretaceous ages, which supplies a good building stone. The prospects of finding valuable mineral deposits in these rocks are not promising. Deposits of asphalt are known to occur in different parts of the Jordan Valley, and have in places been exploited in a primitive way. Systematic drilling, which would require a considerable expenditure *à fonds perdus*, might lead to the discovery of oil in paying quantities.

Though Palestine does not possess riches like Mexico to attract the adventurer and the seeker after mineral wealth, it is a fair country, which under a civilised government could be developed and could maintain a prosperous population many times more numerous than that of to-day. The history of the country and the character of the government explain the present paucity of inhabitants.

Agricultural development will in the beginning be necessarily rather slow. The terraces have to be restored, and dams and irrigation work constructed before large areas are ready for close settlement and intensive cultivation. In the meantime, these tracts could be made use of for ranching, which requires only few hands.

Nevertheless, the possibility exists of finding employment for thousands of fresh immigrants almost as soon as the adminis-

tration of the country passes into the hands of a civilised and progressive government. To exact the largest possible revenue from Palestine was the sole function of the old administration; to settle the greatest number of suitable Jewish colonists within a period compatible with safe development must be the guiding principle of the new. Nothing was done by the Turkish rulers to further the development of the country. No public works, with practically the sole exception of the construction of strategic railways, were undertaken. Thus in Palestine public institutions of prime necessity have yet to be created. The ports are still as nature made them, without any facilities for the shipping trade. There is an insufficiency of roads, there exists no adequate water supply in the cities, no canalisation, lighting installations, telephones, etc.

Harbour works at Jaffa and Haifa are urgently needed, and so are roads and a good water supply for Jerusalem, which has a population of over 100,000 inhabitants. The construction of these public works alone would afford an opportunity for the employment of thousands of town-bred war sufferers from Poland, who will be glad of the possibility of making their homes in the country for which they have yearned so long. The policing of the country will give an opportunity for a great number of brave Jewish soldiers, who have fought so long for other nations, to enter the service of their own land. Thus from the very beginning of an administration with a constructive programme, a numerous staff and an army of labourers could be employed at fair wages. At the same time, the construction of irrigation works and the amelioration of large areas of land at present lying fallow would proceed apace, and the land so redeemed would become ready for the reception of new immigrants and of labourers. These could be acclimatised and adapted to Palestinian conditions by being employed on public works. It is evident that the employment of thousands of new immigrants as indicated would be a great stimulus to the increase of agricultural production. Agriculture on the other hand would, by producing various raw products, give rise to industrial activity. Thus the plantation of olives and the cultivation of castor oil plants, sesame, and ground nuts, would create the basis of an oil and soap industry. The Jordan Valley lends itself admirably to the cultivation of the sugar cane, and for the utilisation of the sugar mills would have to be erected. Sugar, again, in conjunction with the already existing large plantations of orange and other fruit trees, would render possible the manufacture of marmalade, jams, and other fruit preserves. Tobacco plantations would stimulate a tobacco industry. These are examples of the many possibilities which exist of creating industries on the

basis of agricultural products which could be obtained in Palestine. Honey bees exist over a great part of Palestine, and the wax of these bees could certainly, in time, form an article for export. Cattle-breeding, again, would give rise to a leather industry. Fisheries could be developed along the coast line, and the olive oil produced in the country would render possible an industry of fish-preserving.

With the increase of population and production, trade must increase. There is, in particular, one industry which could be very profitably developed, and would do much to stimulate trade, and that is the tourist and hotel industry. Apart from its great historical and religious interest, Palestine has attractions of its own from a climatic and scenic point of view. The beautiful snow-covered mountains of the Lebanon, given railway connection with Egypt, could be reached easily, and would offer Alpine health resorts to the population of the over-heated cities in the valley of the Nile, which now migrates every summer to the distant mountain regions of Europe. There is no more sheltered spot than the Jordan Valley, and especially the borders of the Dead Sea, in which to escape from the rigours of the European winter. Near Tiberias there are medicinal hot springs where important health resorts could be created.

Finally I must mention one circumstance which makes Palestine suitable for Jewish emigration above all other lands. Those who have lived in countries which attract emigrants will have observed that the newcomers strive and labour, until disillusioned by hard facts, to amass riches with the intention of returning and settling again in their own homelands. A shifting, unsettled population is the consequence. The Jew comes to Palestine to stay, to create a permanent home there for himself and for his descendants.

The British Government's declaration of sympathy with the aims of Zionism and the British advance into Palestine have brought to the front once more the political questions relating to that country.

Palestine, situated between the Mediterranean to the west and the great Syrian desert to the east, forms a bridge between Egypt and Syria. Armies after armies have tramped over that bridge from Bible times till to-day. There is perhaps no other country which has seen so much fighting. Palestine has been and still is the only way by which the rulers of Egypt could send their legions to attack the northern empire, the only way by which armies from the north could march to conquer the rich valley of the Nile. The great importance of its strategic position has in the past indeed been the misfortune of Palestine. It is well to bear this fact in mind, lest enthusiasm and love for Zion should in the future obscure the dangers

inherent in the position of the country. But on the other hand this fact presents another aspect. Not only for the sake of Palestine, but to make the peace of the world secure, this highway of mutual invasion must be blocked by the establishment of appropriate political conditions. This territory must, moreover, be settled with a free, independent, and industrious population, which will become rooted to the ground. This the Jewish people only can supply.

This conception, which has forced its way into the world of politics, coincides with Zionist aspirations and demands for the resettlement of Jews in the land of their traditions, longings and ideals. Zionism has behind it the awakened national consciousness of large masses, and this has been recognised by far-seeing British statesmen. The British Government has announced its policy by a declaration in support of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.

By its geographical situation Palestine is admirably adapted to form a connecting link between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Jewish people, politically reorganised there and possessing a practical knowledge of all races, might at length perform its natural office in helping to reconcile the nations. A Jewish Palestine with a population drawn from all countries would be the concrete embodiment of the ideal of a League of Peace, the ideal which all the nations profess to have made their own.

---





